



group deals 1 to 32, inclusive

19 Autobridge®

Advanced course
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Finesses • part 1

Part 2 included in group 20

The 64 deals of Group 19 and 20 are devoted to the most important play in bridge — the finesse. You scarcely ever play a hand in which there is no finesse, but there is a lot to know about finessing.

The finesse is an attempt to win a trick with a card that is not the highest card of its suit *after one opponent has already played to the trick.*

Very nearly all of the plays in bridge are bound up in one way or another with finesses. The variety of the ideas in the first 32 hands may be seen from this partial list:

- How to lead for a finesse
- Guessing the right finesse
- The ruffing finesse
- Deep finesses
- Card reading before finessing
- Finessing for a queen with 9 trumps
- Finessing with a singleton
- The backward finesse
- The obligatory finesse
- Choosing the right finesse
- Finessing to keep a dangerous opponent off lead
- Postponing a finesse
- When *not* to finesse

And there are more ideas in the second set of 32 hands!

DEAL No. 1

NORTH			
♠	A Q 6		
♥	A 4 2		
♦	A Q 8 2		
♣	J 10 7		
WEST		EAST	
♠	10 9 7 4	♠	8 3
♥	K	♥	10 9 8 7
♦	9 7 6 4 3	♦	10 5
♣	A K 5	♣	Q 9 8 4 2
SOUTH			
♠	K J 5 2		
♥	Q J 6 5 3		
♦	K J		
♣	6 3		

North dealer
Neither side vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's opening bid of 1 NT promises 16 to 18 points, with balanced distribution and strength in at least three suits. In this case North has 17 points.

South's response of 2 ♣ is the Stayman convention, asking North to show a 4-card major suit if he has one. South does not promise a club suit (he actually has only two small clubs), but he does have support for at least one major suit plus a plan of action in the face of any of partner's possible responses.

North bids 2 ♦ to show that he has no 4-card major.

South's jump to 3 ♥ is forcing to game and promises at least a 5-card suit. South would not bother to bid a 4-card suit, know-

ing that North has no biddable major suit.

North must go on to game in hearts or notrump. North prefers the game in hearts because he has good 3-card support and because clubs might be a weak spot at notrump.

South does not dream of going beyond game. He has 11 points in high cards and knows that his partner has 18 points at most. The combined total is not enough for slam.

The Play

The defenders take their two club tricks, and South ruffs the third club. Declarer has no losers in spades or diamonds and therefore sees that the game depends on limiting the trump loss to one trick.

A thoughtless player might lead the queen of hearts to try a finesse, but this would cost South his contract. West's king would be captured, but East would eventually get two trump tricks.

If the five missing trumps break 3-2, South can well afford to lead a low trump to dummy's ace and then give up a trick to the king of hearts. South can also limit the loss to one trick if West has the singleton king or if West has a small singleton ... but only by leading a low heart.

The question of whether to lead high or low to start a finesse is easily answered in most cases. Lead a high card if you can well afford to have it covered; otherwise lead low.

DEAL No. 2

NORTH
 ♠ K Q 7 6
 ♥ K 10 9 3
 ♦ K 7 4
 ♣ K 7

WEST

♠ 9
 ♥ A 7 5 2
 ♦ Q 10 9 2
 ♣ J 10 9 4

EAST

♠ 8 3
 ♥ Q 8 6 4
 ♦ 6 3
 ♣ A Q 8 6 2

SOUTH

♠ A J 10 5 4 2
 ♥ J
 ♦ A J 8 5
 ♣ 5 3

South dealer
East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South has only 11 high-card points, and the singleton jack of hearts is a doubtful value. Nevertheless, the hand is easily worth an opening bid. A good player will strain to open when he has a strong spade holding.

North's double raise, forcing to game, shows strong trump support of four or more cards with total value of 13 to 16 points. In this case North has 14 high-card points and 1 point for the doubleton. North may also add 1 point, if desired, for the high cards in partner's bid suit.

The double raise is often the beginning of a slam auction, but in this case South cannot make a slam try. He has a minimum opening bid and must be content to go on to game.

The Play

The defenders begin by taking their two club tricks and then get out safely by leading trumps. South can then afford to lose only one trick in both red suits combined.

There are finesses in both red suits. How should South take these finesses, and which suit should he start first?

South's best chance to avoid the loss of a diamond trick is to lead a low diamond to dummy's king in the hope of dropping a singleton queen. If the queen doesn't drop, he should return a low diamond to finesse the jack from his own hand.

There is no need, however, to play the diamonds early. If the queen of diamonds is in favorable position, it will still be there a few tricks later.

South should start the hearts immediately after drawing trump. He leads the jack of hearts towards the dummy.

When West plays low, declarer can either let the jack ride or put up dummy's king. The question is whether West has the queen of hearts or the ace of hearts. It is apparently a toss-up, but actually South has a good reason for a definite choice.

If West has the ace of hearts, declarer can put up dummy's king and steal the trick. The contract is then unbeatable.

If West has the queen of hearts, declarer can set up *one* heart trick by letting the jack ride, but this one trick will not assure the contract.

South must therefore decide whether to play for something or for nothing. Obviously he should try for what is useful by putting up dummy's king of hearts. The rest is easy.

DEAL No. 3

NORTH

♠ None
♥ A J 10 6 3
♦ Q J 9 6 3 2
♣ 9 2

WEST

♠ K 9 8 5 3 2
♥ 8 7 2
♦ 7 5
♣ 4 3

EAST

♠ 7 6 4
♥ K Q 9 5
♦ A K 10 4
♣ 10 5

SOUTH

♠ A Q J 10
♥ 4
♦ 8
♣ A K Q J 8 7 6

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♦	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	6 ♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 2 ♣ is forcing to game. South is willing to play the hand at five clubs if dummy has a couple of small clubs or at four spades if dummy has four or more small spades — even if the North hand has no high cards at all.

North shows his two biddable suits, hoping to strike a good fit; but South bids the clubs twice, mentions the spades, and then goes back to clubs. South's bidding indicates a 4-card spade

suit and a very powerful club suit of at least six cards.

North finally decides to take a shot at a small slam. If South can virtually guarantee 11 tricks with a worthless dummy, he ought to have a reasonable play for slam with the ace of hearts and the void in spades.

The Play

After the diamond opening and trump return, South must find a way to take the rest of the tricks. The problem is what to do about the spades.

The only chance is a ruffing finesse. South must lead the queen of spades through West in the hope that West has the king. If West plays low, as he does, declarer must simply discard from the dummy.

Since the king of spades is actually in the West hand, this finesse works; the queen of spades wins the trick. South thereupon continues the finesse by leading the jack.

West covers with the king of spades this time, hoping that South's other low spade is not the ten. Dummy ruffs out the king of spades, and South has no further problem.

Declarer cannot afford to lead the ace of spades before beginning the finesses. If he did, West would withhold the king of spades until the fourth round — and then East would over-ruff dummy with the ten of clubs.

DEAL No. 4

NORTH

♠ 10 9 2
♥ A Q J 6
♦ Q 10
♣ K 10 5 2

WEST

♠ 8 7
♥ 7 3
♦ K J 6 3 2
♣ J 9 4 3

EAST

♠ Q J 5 3
♥ 8 5
♦ 9 8 7 4
♣ Q 7 6

SOUTH

♠ A K 6 4
♥ K 10 9 4 2
♦ A 5
♣ A 8

South dealer

North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
6 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's double raise shows strong trump support of four or more cards with about 13 to 16 points in support. In this case North has 12 points in high cards and 1 point for the doubleton.

South is willing to be in a slam opposite partner's jump raise and there is a possibility of a grand slam.

North shows one ace, as expected, by the response of 5 ♦. South thereupon bids 5 NT, showing that he has all of the missing aces and asking North to tell about his kings.

When North shows only one king, the grand slam is too risky, so South bids a quiet 6 ♥.

The Play

Even the small slam is risky, since South is threatened with the loss of a spade and a diamond. The opening lead is helpful, however.

The eight of spades cannot be a fourth-best lead, since the only missing higher cards are queen and jack. It cannot be the lowest card from an honor, since if West held Q-J-8 he would lead the queen rather than the eight. The lead must be a singleton, the top of a doubleton, or the top of a worthless suit.

In any of these situations declarer can develop the six of spades as a trick. He must first draw trumps and then lead the ten of spades through East to slaughter all of the honor cards in the suit. If the seven of spades is still out, South can then go to dummy with a club to lead dummy's last spade.

As it happens, the seven of spades drops at Trick 4, making it clear that West has no more spades.

Since East must hold the two remaining spades, South can safely go to dummy and finesse the four of spades. This unusual finesse produces 13 tricks.

DEAL No. 5

		NORTH			
		♠	J 9 6 3		
		♥	A J 5		
		♦	A 4 3		
		♣	Q 7 4		
WEST				EAST	
♠	10 4			♠	Q 5
♥	Q 8 6			♥	9 7 4 2
♦	7 6 5 2			♦	K 9 8
♣	J 10 9 5			♣	A K 8 6
		SOUTH			
		♠	A K 8 7 2		
		♥	K 10 3		
		♦	Q J 10		
		♣	3 2		

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's double raise promises strong trump support of four or more cards but does not guarantee the usual 13 to 16 points in support since North is a "passed hand." After a player has passed, thus showing that he lacks the strength for an opening bid, his double raise may be shaded down to 12 or even to 11 points.

Many experts would pass three spades with the South hand, since he has a skimpy opening bid opposite a hand that was not worth an opening bid. Do not consider it a mistake if you mentally passed three spades, but go

on with the play as though you bid four spades.

The Play

West opens the jack of clubs, and South has his work cut out for him. He is sure to lose two clubs, may well lose a diamond and a trump, and will have to guess which opponent has the queen of hearts.

Declarer plays a low club from dummy at the first trick in the forlorn hope that East has the unguarded A-K. South plays the queen of clubs from dummy at the next trick in the hope of finding out exactly how the clubs lie. East shows up, as expected, with both the ace and king.

Declarer ruffs the third club and hopefully leads out the top trumps. Fortunately the queen falls.

South next tries the diamond finesse. There is only one way to play the diamonds, and the result may tell South how to play the hearts.

When East shows up with the king of diamonds, South does some thinking. East passed in second position even though he held ace-king of clubs, king of diamonds, and queen of spades — a total of 12 points in high cards. If East also held the queen of hearts, he would have held 14 points in high cards and would not have passed.

For this reason, South decides to take the heart finesse through West. The reasoning is right, and South makes the game contract.

NORTH
 ♠ 9 8 5 3
 ♥ K 7
 ♦ A K Q J
 ♣ Q 7 4

WEST
 ♠ A 2
 ♥ 10 6 5 2
 ♦ 4 3 2
 ♣ 10 9 8 3

EAST
 ♠ J 6 4
 ♥ A Q 8 4 3
 ♦ 10 8 7
 ♣ 6 2

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q 10 7
 ♥ J 9
 ♦ 9 6 5
 ♣ A K J 5

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North has a routine opening bid of 1 ♦, and South has an easy response of 1 ♠.

South is willing to get to game since he has an opening bid opposite an opening bid.

When he hears partner's spade raise, his problem is that he holds only four spades and fears that North has raised on a 3-card suit. In that case, there may be an easier play for game in notrump rather than spades.

When South shows his outside strength in clubs and that he has a desire to be in game, North, holding a maximum for his original single raise, and a 4-card spade suit, jumps to 4 ♠.

South should play a low heart from dummy at the first trick. Good players almost never under lead an ace at the first trick, so East is sure to have the ace of hearts. West may have the queen of hearts, however, and the play of a low heart from dummy is a type of finesse against the queen.

As it happens, East has both of the missing heart honors. He takes two heart tricks and returns a club.

Declarer wins the club return in dummy to begin the trumps. He plays the king from his hand, and West plays low. This makes it appear that East has the ace of spades.

South gets back to dummy to lead another trump, and East again plays low. Should South put up the queen of spades or should he finesse the ten?

Against weak opponents, South should play the queen. A weak West would surely capture the king of spades if he had the ace.

Against strong opponents, South cannot be sure. South works it out by recalling that East failed to bid hearts after North's opening bid of one diamond. East is known to have a long heart suit headed by the A-Q. If he also held the ace of spades he would surely have overcalled.

South plays West for the ace of spades and finesses the 10, making his contract.

DEAL No. 7

The Play

NORTH			
♠ K 8 7 3			
♥ A 10 5			
♦ J 10 3			
♣ 8 6 4			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 2		♠ Q 5 4	
♥ 8 3		♥ J 9 6 4 2	
♦ A K Q 7 6 4 2		♦ 8	
♣ Q 7 2		♣ J 10 9 5	
SOUTH			
♠ A J 10 9 6			
♥ K Q 7			
♦ 9 5			
♣ A K 3			
<i>South dealer</i>			
<i>Both sides vulnerable</i>			
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	2 ♦	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South has full values for his opening bid. When North shows spade support, he reevaluates his hands - 17 points in high cards, plus 1 point for the doubleton and 1 point extra for the fifth spade after the suit is supported. His full count is 19 points, which should be enough, coupled with North's raise, to yield a reasonable play game.

South loses the first two diamond tricks and ruffs the third, noting that East can follow to only one round of diamonds. Since South must sooner or later lose a club trick the contract will depend on picking up the queen of spades.

How should South play the trumps?

The old rule on finessing for a queen is: With eight, ever; with nine, never. That is, take a finesse for the queen if you have only eight cards in the suit, but not if you have nine cards.

This is a good rule for most occasions, but don't apply it when the distribution is unusual. In this case, West started with seven diamonds and East with only one. The odds are about 2 to 1 in favor of a finesse through East rather than a play to drop the queen by leading out the king and ace.

The general principle is very simple: when one player has great length in one suit, he is likely to be short in others.

South plays West to be short in spades and therefore finesses through East for the queen of spades.

DEAL No. 8

NORTH

♠ 7 2
♥ A Q 10 6 2
♦ 8 5 3
♣ A K 8

WEST

♠ Q 10 4 3
♥ K 8 7 3
♦ Q J 10
♣ 7 4

EAST

♠ 6
♥ J 9 5
♦ A 9 7 2
♣ 10 9 6 3 2

SOUTH

♠ A K J 9 8 5
♥ 4
♦ K 6 4
♣ Q J 5

North dealer

North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North opens with 1 ♥ and rebids 1 NT to show a hand of minimum strength with balanced distribution. (With unbalanced distribution he would either bid another suit, rebid his hearts, or raise partner.)

South pushes on to game in spades. He should have a fine play for game with 14 points of his own in high cards opposite an opening bid, including at least a doubleton spade.

The Play

South wins the second diamond trick and thinks first of drawing the trumps. How should he play the trump suit?

South plans to finesse for the queen of spades, but has no need to finesse on the first round. He can take the precaution of first leading out the ace of spades. If the queen of spades happens to drop, he will be glad that he didn't try a finesse.

As it happens, nothing important drops. South therefore gets to dummy with a club in order to lead a spade from dummy. He plans to finesse this time.

When East discards a club, South changes his mind about finessing. West is sure to get two trump tricks in any case.

South steps up with the king of spades and does some more thinking. Since he is sure to lose two trump tricks, he cannot afford to lose two diamond tricks.

What can South do to save one diamond trick?

The only hope is to try the heart finesse, even though South has a singleton heart. If the finesse works, South will be able to discard a diamond on dummy's ace of hearts. If the finesse loses, South will be down two tricks instead of only one.

Does it pay to take this risk? It does. South has an even chance to win his gamble. If he wins, he will score game and rubber instead of going down one — a gain of many hundreds of points. If he loses, he will lose 200 instead of 100, a loss of only 100 additional points.

DEAL No. 9

The Play

NORTH

♠ A K 8 7 6

♥ 9 7

♦ K Q J

♣ K J 2

WEST

♠ J 4 2

♥ A 8 3

♦ 6 5 3 2

♣ 10 5 4

EAST

♠ None

♥ K Q J 6 5 2

♦ A 7 4

♣ Q 7 6 3

SOUTH

♠ Q 10 9 5 3

♥ 10 4

♦ 10 9 8

♣ A 9 8

East dealer

Neither side vulnerable

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1 ♥	Pass	Pass	Double
2 ♥	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The Bidding

When West passes his partner's opening bid, North wisely decides to reopen the bidding. This is almost always a good idea, although inexperienced players often prefer to let sleeping dogs lie.

North reopens with a takeout double to show that he has support for all the unbid suits. East rebids his hearts and South, with good spades and a few high cards, shows his suit.

North jumps right to game as soon as he hears a sign of life from South. He has 17 points in high cards, 1 point for the doubleton, and 1 point for the fifth trump.

The defenders take the first two hearts, and East next cashes the ace of diamonds. South cannot, therefore, afford to lose a club trick.

Normally, South would draw trumps and finesse through West for the queen of clubs. In this case South is unwilling to take the finesse because he is sure it will lose.

West has shown up with the ace of hearts and the jack of spades by the time that South must make up his mind. West cannot also have the queen of clubs, for with 7 points in high cards he would have responded to his partner's opening bid instead of passing.

South wonders if the queen of clubs will fall, and runs an extra trump in the hope of getting information. East discards a club, and he wouldn't do that if he had started with Q-x of clubs. Moreover, it becomes clear that East started with three diamonds and no spades. The possibility of shortness in clubs simply doesn't exist.

The only hope is a "backward" finesse. Declarer must lead the jack of clubs from dummy to capture the queen. Then he must lead the nine of clubs through West as a finesse against the ten. West cannot possibly have the queen of clubs, but he may have the ten.

DEAL No. 10

NORTH

♠ K 9
♥ Q 7 6 4
♦ Q 5
♣ A K J 5 4

WEST

♠ Q J 10 7 6 3
♥ A 5
♦ 10 9 6 3
♣ 6

EAST

♠ A 8 4
♥ J 10 8
♦ 8 7 4 2
♣ 8 7 2

SOUTH

♠ 5 2
♥ K 9 3 2
♦ A K J
♣ Q 10 9 3

North dealer

North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

After North's opening bid of 1 ♣, South should respond in hearts. South has the strength and the club support for a jump to 3 ♣, but he should show the major suit first.

West overcalls in spades and North raises the hearts. Now South can show his club support, since there is a chance that North had to raise hearts on a 3-card suit.

Note that there is no need to jump to 4 ♣, even though South wishes to be in game. North may wish to bid game in notrump; he can bid 3 NT over 3 ♣, but he can't over 4 ♣.

As it happens, North goes back to hearts, and South carries on to game in the major suit.

The Play

West opens the queen of spades, and the defenders take a successful finesse through dummy's king. As a result, South can afford to lose only one trump trick.

The trump loss can be limited to one trick only if one of the opponents has A-x of trumps. The first problem is to decide which opponent has the ace of trumps; and then South must play the cards correctly.

Clearly, West should have the ace of trumps; he can have no other high card to bolster up his spade overcall.

South therefore leads a low trump from the South hand. The idea is to put the opponent with A-x of trumps in second position.

West properly plays low, and dummy's queen wins. On the next trump, South deliberately plays low in the hope that West must play his ace anyway. This "obligatory finesse" works, and South makes the contract.

DEAL No. 11

NORTH		EAST	
♠	K Q 9 7	♠	8 3
♥	10 6	♥	9 5 4
♦	10 8 4	♦	J 9 7 6
♣	Q 9 3 2	♣	A 8 7 6
WEST		SOUTH	
♠	4	♠	A J 10 6 5 2
♥	A K 7 3 2	♥	Q J 8
♦	K 5 3 2	♦	A Q
♣	J 10 5	♣	K 4

*South dealer
Both sides vulnerable*

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's raise to 2 ♠ promises trump support (usually Q-x-x or better) with a count of about 7 to 10 points.

South revalues his hand after the raise. He has 17 points in high cards, 1 point for each of the two doubletons, 1 point for the fifth spade, and 2 points for the sixth spade. The total is 22 points, and North's raise shows at least 7 points, so that the partnership assets should be enough for game. South jumps to 4 ♠, ending the auction.

The Play

South must lose two hearts and a club no matter how the

play goes. The problem is to avoid the loss of a diamond.

The obvious solution to the problem is to try the diamond finesse. If East has the king of diamonds, the finesse will work and South will be home.

A good player does not charge at a finesse like a bull at the matador's cape. The finesse can be reserved as a last resort. First, however, South looks for a way to set up a *sure* trick.

After drawing trumps, declarer leads a club from dummy to his own king. The next step is to return a club. When West plays the ten of clubs, declarer carefully plays low from dummy. There is no advantage in covering with dummy's queen, and there is an advantage in allowing West to hold the lead: he cannot safely attack diamonds.

West goes back to hearts, after which South leads a trump to dummy in order to make another try for the club trick. There are two favorable possibilities: East may have the blank ace of clubs left, or West may have the blank jack of clubs.

The spots tell the story. East played the eight of clubs first and the six of clubs later. He would be more likely to do so with A-8-7-6 than with A-8-6.

For this reason, declarer leads the queen of clubs from dummy as part of a complicated ruffing finesse. East's ace is trapped and West's jack of clubs is captured at the same time. When this maneuver works, South can discard the queen of diamonds and can therefore dispense with the diamond finesse.

DEAL No. 12

The Play

NORTH

♠ A Q 2

♥ 7 4 3

♦ 7 6 3 2

♣ J 10 6

WEST

♠ 7

♥ K 8 5

♦ A K Q J 8

♣ 8 7 4 3

EAST

♠ 9 5

♥ J 10 6 2

♦ 10 5

♣ K Q 9 5 2

SOUTH

♠ K J 10 8 6 4 3

♥ A Q 9

♦ 9 4

♣ A

South dealer

North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	2 ♦	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

When North shows spade support, South revalues his hand: 14 points in high cards, 1 point for the doubleton, 2 points for the singleton, and 5 points for length in spades.

Extra cards in your trump suit are like money in the bank; they will surely win tricks. It is therefore reasonable to count them at a higher rate than extra cards in some doubtful side suit. After your suit has been raised by partner, count 1 point extra for a fifth trump and 2 points extra for any trumps in excess of five.

South's full count is 22 points, easily enough for game. He therefore jumps right to game.

The defenders take two diamonds, and South must limit the loss in hearts to one trick.

One way to do so is to try the normal heart finesse. That is, South can get to dummy and lead a heart, finessing the queen from his hand. If East has the king of hearts, this play will assure the contract.

This is not, however, South's only chance. It is possible that East has J-10 at the head of his hearts. If so, South can finesse the 9 of hearts to drive out the king. This is the play that works at Trick 6.

The important thing to notice is that South loses nothing by trying this deep finesse. If the 9 of hearts loses to the 10 or jack, South can go back to dummy and lead another heart to try the finesse of the queen. This will be just as good as finessing the queen at Trick 6.

East cannot interfere by putting the 10 at Trick 6. South covers with the queen to drive out the king and can later finesse the 9.

DEAL No.13

NORTH

♠ A Q 8 4

♥ 8 7 3 2

♦ A 8 4

♣ Q 10

WEST

♠ 5

♥ K 9 4

♦ 9 7 3 2

♣ K J 8 4 2

EAST

♠ 7 6 3

♥ Q J 10 6

♦ K Q 6

♣ 9 6 3

SOUTH

♠ K J 10 9 2

♥ A 5

♦ J 10 5

♣ A 7 5

South dealer

East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's raise to 3 ♠ shows strong trump support of four or more cards, with about 13 to 16 points in support. In this case, North has 12 points in high cards and 1 point for the doubleton.

The double raise is forcing to game and often sets the stage for a slam auction. If the opening bidder has substantially more than a minimum opening bid, he knows that the partnership has enough strength to be in the slam zone, and that they have a fine trump suit as the backbone of a high contract.

In this case, however, South has only a minimum opening bid. He simply bids 4 ♠, ending the auction.

The Play

South's trumps are solid, but he must lose one trick in each of the side suits. If his luck is bad, he may lose a second trick in diamonds.

The opening lead is encouraging, since there is reason to hope that West has led fourth-best from the king or from the queen of diamonds. South can duck the first trick, allowing East to win the trick. Later, South can lead the jack of diamonds to finesse through West's probable honor in diamonds.

The idea looks especially good when East wins the first trick with the king of diamonds. If East held both the king and queen of diamonds, he normally would win the first trick with the queen.

South must remember, however, that the world is full of wicked people who will try to deceive him when they are playing against him. It is possible that East, the villain, actually has the queen of diamonds even though he played the king at the first trick.

South can lose nothing by testing the clubs before he tries the diamond finesse. When West shows up with the king of clubs, no further diamond finesse is necessary. South would go down if he relied solely on the diamonds.

DEAL No. 14

NORTH			
♠ 8 4 2			
♥ 5 3			
♦ 7 5 4			
♣ A Q J 3 2			
WEST		EAST	
♠ Q 7 3		♠ J 10 9 6	
♥ Q J 10 9 6		♥ 7 4 2	
♦ K Q 10		♦ 9 6	
♣ K 5		♣ 9 8 7 6	
SOUTH			
♠ A K 5			
♥ A K 8			
♦ A J 8 3 2			
♣ 10 4			

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	1 ♥	Pass	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

The opening bid is routine, and so is West's overcall. North does not have enough to bid on the two level, so he passes to await developments.

South, holding 19 high card points, does not want to sell out for 1 ♥, so he shows that he holds more than a 1 NT opener plus stoppers in hearts by bidding 1 NT. (If he held 16 to 18 points he would have opened 1 NT originally, of course.)

North adds his 7 points to South's 19 (or more) and decides that 3 NT is a reasonable contract.

The Play

South has two main plays for his contract. The first is to bring in four club tricks. The second is to find the diamonds split 3-2, with only two diamonds in the West hand.

South tries for both plans at once by refusing the first heart trick and leading the ten of clubs next for a finesse.

When West covers with the king, South must restrain the normal but greedy impulse to win in dummy with the ace. South doesn't need all five club tricks for the contract; four will be enough. He can afford to give one up — provided it is the first trick in the suit.

South later runs the rest of the clubs and makes the contract. If he had won the first club trick in dummy, East's 9-8-7-6 would have stopped the suit and declarer would have been able to win only three club tricks instead of four.

The moral of this hand is that it doesn't always pay to win a trick even when your finesse works.

DEAL No. 15

NORTH			
♠	A 4 3		
♥	Q 5		
♦	10 8 4 2		
♣	K J 7 4		
WEST		EAST	
♠	9 7 6 2	♠	Q J 8
♥	K 9 7 4 2	♥	8 6 3
♦	K 3	♦	Q 7 6 5
♣	9 3	♣	Q 10 8
SOUTH			
♠	K 10 5		
♥	A J 10		
♦	A J 9		
♣	A 6 5 2		

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 1 NT promises balanced distribution, stoppers in at least three suits, and 16 to 18 points in high cards.

Since North has 10 points in high cards he can see that the combined strength is 26 to 28 points. This is enough to yield a reasonable play for game, so North bids the game in notrump.

The Play

South can expect to take two spades, two hearts, a diamond, and two clubs. Two other tricks are needed for the contract.

The problem is whether to seek these tricks in clubs or in diamonds.

With a little luck South might get two additional tricks in clubs. He might cash the ace of clubs and finesse dummy's jack of clubs in the hope of winning all

four club tricks. This would work if West had Q-x or Q-x-x of clubs.

If the club finesse should fail, however, East would return a heart to set up his partner's long suit. South would have only eight tricks, and any attempt to develop the ninth trick in diamonds would allow West to run his hearts.

The advantage of tackling the diamonds first is that a losing finesse would give the lead to West rather than to East. West cannot afford to renew the attack on hearts, since that would give South a free finesse. (South has deceptively played the jack of hearts at Trick 1 in the hope of luring West into this error.)

West actually shifts to spades after winning the king of diamonds. South wins in dummy to repeat the diamond finesse.

It is then time to test the clubs. The finesse loses, and East returns a heart, as expected, but South is in position to take nine tricks since he has already developed an additional diamond trick.

DEAL No. 16

NORTH			
♠	Q 5		
♥	A 10 7 4		
♦	K 9 8		
♣	K 7 6 3		
WEST		EAST	
♠	J 9 7 4 2	♠	A 10 6
♥	6 3	♥	Q J 9 8 5
♦	Q 6 5 3	♦	4
♣	Q 4	♣	J 10 9 8
SOUTH			
♠	K 8 3		
♥	K 2		
♦	A J 10 7 2		
♣	A 5 2		

South dealer
North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's rebid of 1 NT shows a near-minimum opening bid.

North assumes that his partner has about 13 or 14 points. He has 12 points of his own and should attach a little extra value to the king of diamonds, the suit his partner has bid. The combined count should be at least 25 points and may well be 26 or even 27, so North wastes no time in getting to game.

If North had only 11 points, he would raise to 2 NT, inviting South to go on. In this case, of course, South would be glad to accept the invitation since he has 15 points instead of the 13 or 14 points promised by his bid.

Always keep in mind how many points your bidding has promised. If you have extra points, you can afford to accept invitations; if you have only what you have promised, or perhaps a trifle less, you will reject invitations to bid more.

The Play

South plays the queen of spades at trick 1; this is the expert way to cut the communications between the defenders. See what happens if he plays low at trick 1 — he must play his king to win the trick and then whichever defender wins next, the hand with the long spades will be able to cash enough tricks to set the contract.

He holds up the king of spades until the third round and must then develop the diamonds in

such a way as to shut out West, the dangerous opponent.

The simplest method is a finesse against the queen of diamonds. South doesn't know who has the queen, but takes the finessses so as to lose (if his guess is wrong) to East — the safe opponent.

As it happens, the finesse works, and South is sure of 10 tricks. Declarer develops a squeeze against East and actually wins an eleventh trick.

If dummy's queen of spades had held the first trick, South would then know that West had the ace of spades and that it was vital to shut *East* out of the lead. In that event, he would cash the king of diamonds and lead the nine of diamonds to finesse through East.

When you have a two-way finesse against a queen you can take your finesse in such a way as to keep the dangerous opponent out of the lead.

(Note that declarer does not cash the ace of diamonds before taking the finesse, since a 4-1 split [such as actually is the case on this hand] will then defeat him.)

DEAL No. 17

NORTH		
♠	Q 5	
♥	A J 7	
♦	A K J 7 4	
♣	10 7 3	
WEST	EAST	
♠	A J 9 4 2	♠ 10 7 3
♥	10 6 3	♥ 9 8 4 2
♦	5 2	♦ Q 8 3
♣	K 6 4	♣ 8 5 2
SOUTH		
♠	K 8 6	
♥	K Q 5	
♦	10 9 6	
♣	A Q J 9	

South dealer
East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

The bidding is much the same as in Deal 16, and the same principles apply.

The Play

When the queen of spades holds the first trick it is apparent that West has led from a long suit headed by the ace. If East is allowed to gain the lead he will return a spade and South's king will be captured. *East* is therefore the dangerous opponent.

South must try to develop nine tricks in such a way as to keep the dangerous opponent out of the lead. This rules out a diamond finesse, since such a play would risk giving the lead to East.

Declarer considers the clubs instead. If South loses a club finesse there will be no danger from West since a spade continuation would give South a second spade trick. If West shifts to a new suit, South will have his game with one spade, three hearts, two diamonds, and three clubs.

South proceeds with the plan, reserving the diamond finesse until the last possible moment. At that time, however, South wisely decides not to take the finesse since it would endanger the contract; East would win the queen of diamonds and give West the rest of the tricks by returning a spade.

Study this hand in combination with No. 16. There, the queen of spades lost the first

trick, and West became the dangerous opponent. In this case, the queen of spades holds the first trick, and *East* is the dangerous opponent. The method of developing the hand depends on which opponent is dangerous.

If East captured the queen of spades in this hand, as he did on No. 16, West would become dangerous and South would develop dummy's diamonds instead of his own clubs.

DEAL No. 18

NORTH	
♠	K 9 7 4
♥	8 4 2
♦	8 5
♣	K J 8 3
WEST	EAST
♠	10
♥	A 7 6
♦	J 10 9 6 2
♣	9 7 6 2
♠	Q 6 2
♥	Q J 10 9
♦	Q 7 4 3
♣	10 4
SOUTH	
♠	A J 8 5 3
♥	K 5 3
♦	A K
♣	A Q 5

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 NT	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South must bid merely 1 ♠ despite his 21 points in high cards. He might bid 2 NT if his long suit were a minor, relying on the length of his suit to make up for the shading of 1 point; but he should not suppress a *major* suit for this purpose.

North's raise to 2 ♠ shows trump support, with 7 to 10 points in support of spades.

South can now show his balanced distribution and great strength by jumping to game in notrump. Slam is pretty much out of the question in view of North's weak bid.

North goes back to spades since he has 4-card trump support. He would pass if he had only three spades. In rubber bridge, prefer a sound major suit contract to notrump. The trump suit usually gives you a good play for an additional trick, and there is far less danger of going down several tricks if your luck is bad.

The Play

South is tempted to draw two rounds of trumps with the king and ace in the hope of dropping the queen. If the queen fails to drop, South can try to run the clubs in the hope of discarding a heart.

Even if East can ruff the second or third club, South will still be safe if East has the ace of hearts.

This is a very good way to play the hand, and South would adopt it except for one reason: there is a *better* way to play it.

South leads a trump to the king and returns a trump to *finesse through East*. If the finesse should lose, West cannot do any harm. South will eventually discard a heart on dummy's last club and then can lose only two hearts and a trump at most.

As it happens, the finesse works. This is even better, for South then makes an overtrick.

As you might expect in this book, failure to finesse in trumps would cost South the contract. East would ruff the third club and return a heart, giving the defense a trump and three hearts.

DEAL No. 19

NORTH	
♠	K 10 9 6
♥	9 5 3
♦	A J 6
♣	A Q 4
WEST	
♠	5 4 2
♥	A 10 8 6 2
♦	7 3 2
♣	6 5
EAST	
♠	Q 8 7 3
♥	Q 7
♦	8 5 4
♣	K 8 7 2
SOUTH	
♠	A J
♥	K J 4
♦	K Q 10 9
♣	J 10 9 3

South dealer

Neither side vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

The bidding is much the same as in No. 16 and No. 17. The rebid of 1 NT by South shows a balanced hand that was not good enough for an opening bid of 1 NT, a maximum of 15 points in high cards and a minimum of about 13 points.

North needs no further information to select the best final contract.

The Play

The play at the first trick indicates that West has opened a long suit headed by the ace. If East is allowed to gain the lead, he will return a heart, and West will run the rest of his suit.

If possible, therefore, South must develop his tricks without giving the lead to East. Since the normal club finesse would give the lead to East, South must look for another plan.

The search for another plan doesn't take long. South can develop three spade tricks by finessing through East. If the finesse should lose to West, there is no danger; whether the finesse wins or loses South will surely win three spade tricks.

As it happens, the finesse wins. South takes his tricks and leads the jack of clubs at Trick 9 just in case West belongs to the tribe of honor-coverers. When West fails to play the king of clubs (for the best of reasons), South prudently plays the ace of clubs from dummy to make sure of the contract.

DEAL No. 20

NORTH	
♠	6 4
♥	A 8 4
♦	A K 10 8 4 3
♣	K 6
WEST	EAST
♠	A 10 8 7 3
♥	9 6 5 2
♦	5
♣	8 7 3
SOUTH	
♠	K Q 5
♥	K 7 3
♦	Q 9
♣	A 9 5 4 2

North dealer North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South's jump to 2 NT shows balanced distribution, 13 to 15 points, and strength in all of the unbid suits. This response is forcing to game.

North naturally raises to 3 NT. He has 14 points in high cards and therefore knows that the combined strength is 27 to 29 points. This should be enough for game, but not for a slam.

North would rebid his long suit if it were a major, but there is no particular virtue in shying away from no trump in favor of a minor suit unless unbalanced distribution makes notrump look dangerous.

The Play

The first trick makes it clear that West has led from a long suit headed by A-10. Just as in No. 19, South must try to develop his tricks without allowing East to gain the lead.

Normal play of the diamond would allow East to win a trick if he has J-x-x-x. This will defeat the contract, for South can only take one spade, two hearts, three diamonds, and two clubs. As soon as East wins a diamond trick he will return a spade, and West will defeat the contract.

South can avoid the danger by developing the diamonds in such a way as to shut East out of the lead. He does this by entering dummy with one of the side suits in order to lead a diamond and finesse the nine from the South hand.

If this deep finesse should lose, West can do no harm and South can easily make game with the rest of the diamonds. When the finesse happens to win, South has an even easier time.

It is unusual to finesse against a jack, but it is sometimes necessary to do so to make sure of keeping a dangerous opponent out of the lead.

Since North has 10 points, he knows that the partnership strength comes to at least 26 points, which is usually enough for a game contract. There is no need to invite game when North knows that he wants to be in game regardless of his partner's wishes. Hence North jumps to game at once.

The Play

South starts with eight sure tricks and must develop a ninth trick to make his contract. After holding up the first trick, South discovers that West has led from a 5-card club suit and that it would therefore be fatal to let West gain the lead prematurely.

South's only chance is to develop an extra spade trick without allowing West to get in. The only play is to lead a low spade from the South hand and finesse dummy's ten.

This will work if West has either two or three spades headed by a single picture card. The finesse of the ten loses to East, but then West's honor drops and sets up South's nine of spades. South's play would work, likewise, if East had Q-J doubleton or Q-J-x of spades.

DEAL No. 21

		NORTH	
		♠	A 10
		♥	J 6 3
		♦	A J 10 4
		♣	8 7 3 2
WEST		EAST	
♠	J 6 5	♠	Q 8 7 3
♥	K 7	♥	Q 10 8 4 2
♦	9 5 2	♦	8 7 3
♣	K Q J 9 4	♣	6
		SOUTH	
		♠	K 9 4 2
		♥	A 9 5
		♦	K Q 6
		♣	A 10 5

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

The opening bid of 1 NT shows 16 to 18 points with balanced distribution and strength in at least three suits.

DEAL No. 22

The Play

NORTH			
♠ Q 5 3			
♥ 6 4 3 2			
♦ 7 5 4 3 2			
♣ A			
WEST		EAST	
♠ J 10 7		♠ 9 8 6	
♥ J 9 8 5		♥ 10 7	
♦ K J		♦ 10 9 8	
♣ Q 10 8 4		♣ K J 9 6 3	
SOUTH			
♠ A K 4 2			
♥ A K Q			
♦ A Q 6			
♣ 7 5 2			
<i>South dealer</i>			
<i>North-South vulnerable</i>			
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

Despite the lack of a club stopper, most experts would open the South hand with a 2 NT bid. North attempts to find a major suit fit, but when South reports that his 4-card major is spades, 3 NT seems to be the best contract. (Actually 4 ♠ is easy, but North cannot tell where South's high cards are.)

The opening lead knocks out the ace of clubs, and South must now take nine tricks without permitting the opponents to win one, since they have enough clubs to defeat the contract if they get in.

For this reason South is reluctant to try the diamond finesse. Fortunately there is no hurry. South can afford to test out the hearts and spades first.

South begins by leading out the top hearts. If the suit breaks 3-3, dummy's last heart will furnish the ninth trick.

When this fails, South takes the three top spades, ending in the dummy. Since the suit breaks 3-3, South can reject the diamond finesse. The last spade is his ninth trick.

If both hearts and spades had broken badly, South would have tried the diamond finesse as his last resort. This line of play gives South three chances for his contract; an early diamond finesse would give him only that one chance.

DEAL No. 23

NORTH	
♠	A J 9
♥	J 10 8 6 2
♦	7
♣	K 7 5 4
WEST	EAST
♠	K 8 5 4 2
♥	3
♦	Q J 10 5 2
♣	9 3
SOUTH	
♠	10 7
♥	A K Q 9 7 4
♦	A K
♣	A 6 2

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's jump to 4 ♥ after an original pass shows a hand too strong for the invitational jump to 3 ♥. As a passed hand, North might jump to 3 ♥ with about 11 or 12 points in support of hearts; this jump would be invitational, but not forcing to game.

North has too good a hand for this, counting 9 points in high cards, 3 points for the singleton, plus a point or so extra for length in trumps and another point for the jack of partner's bid suit. The hand is worth 13 or 14 points in support of hearts,

and North should want to be in game even if South has a rather skimpy opening bid.

The situation would be different, of course, if North had not passed to begin with. Then a jump to 3 ♥ would be forcing to game, and a jump to 4 ♥ would be a sort of shutout bid.

After North's jump to 4 ♥, South should go right to slam. A grand slam is out of the question in view of North's original pass, but a small slam should be a reasonable contract. South should avoid "scientific" bidding because the slam may depend on a favorable opening lead and South should give the opposition as little information as possible.

The Play

There are two ways to try for the slam contract, and South must choose the one that is more likely to succeed.

One plan is to lead out the top clubs and give up a club. If each opponent has three clubs, dummy's fourth club will become good and will give South a spade discard.

The other plan is to take two spade finesses. If one finesse works, South can discard his losing club on dummy's ace of spades.

The chance of a 3-3 club break is 36%, and the chance that West will have one or both spade pictures is 75%. Clearly, it is better to adopt the line of play that has a 75% chance of success.

DEAL No. 24

NORTH			
♠ A 6 3			
♥ 9 5 3 2			
♦ 5 3 2			
♣ 8 5 4			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 10 5 2		♠ Q J 9 7	
♥ Q 8 6 4		♥ 10 7	
♦ J 10 9 8		♦ Q 4	
♣ 7 3		♣ A 10 9 6 2	
SOUTH			
♠ K 8 4			
♥ A K J			
♦ A K 7 6			
♣ K Q J			

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

The opening bid of 2 NT shows 22 to 24 points, balanced distribution, and strength in all four suits. It is not forcing to game, but asks partner to raise with as little as 4 points.

As it happens, North has the 4 points required for a raise. He goes on to game hopefully.

South doesn't dream of bidding again. He has already announced his strength, and North would try for a slam if he had 9 points or more.

The Play

South has two tricks in each suit and must search for a ninth trick.

The main chance for the ninth trick is in hearts. One way to try for a third heart trick is to enter dummy with the ace of spades and take a simple heart finesse. This has a 50% chance of working.

Instead, South leads the hearts from the top down. This will set up the jack if the queen drops singleton, or doubleton; and will set up dummy's nine if the ten drops singleton, doubleton or tripleton. The odds are better than 2 to 1 in South's favor, compared to the even chance of a heart finesse.

One of the things to know about finessing is when *not* to finesse.

DEAL No. 25

NORTH			
♠ 5 4 2			
♥ K 7 3			
♦ Q 10 7 2			
♣ K 4 3			
WEST		EAST	
♠ Q		♠ A 6 3	
♥ Q J 10 4		♥ A 9 8 6	
♦ K 8 5 4		♦ J 9 6 3	
♣ 9 6 5 2		♣ 10 8	
SOUTH			
♠ K J 10 9 8 7			
♥ 5 2			
♦ A			
♣ A Q J 7			

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's response of 1 NT shows about 6 to 10 points in high cards.

The jump to 3♦ is invitational and non-forcing. It shows a suit of six or more cards with a hand which will win about seven tricks. The high card points are hard to define - total points including distribution range from about 18 to 21. In this case, South has 15 points in high cards, plus 2 points for the singleton, 1 point for the doubleton, and about 3 points for the length in his strong spade suit.

When a suit has been raised, add 1 point for the fifth card and 2 points for any additional card in the suit, on the theory that the long cards will all become tricks. Much the same is true of a solid or semi-solid 6-card or longer suit headed by a sequence of honors. Declarer can use the top cards to draw trumps, after which the small cards will all be winners. Therefore anyone holding a suit like this can afford to count points for length just as though the suit had been raised.

With 8 high card points and three cards in partner's suit, North has no problem in raising the invitational bid to game.

The Play

When the king of hearts is captured, South can reach the dummy only once - with the king of clubs. He must use this one entry for the proper play in trumps.

If the missing trumps are 2-2, either the king or the jack may be the correct play at Trick 5. One play is as good as the other since it is a pure toss-up whether East has A-x or Q-x of trumps.

If the trumps are 3-1, South's only chance is to play the king. This will work if West has the singleton queen. If West has any other singleton, the defenders will surely get two spade tricks; If West has A-Q-x, West will surely win two trumps. The only singleton that will help South is the singleton queen.

No play can be guaranteed, but the king is more likely to succeed than any other.

DEAL No. 26

NORTH			
♠ Q J 10			
♥ A J 7 2			
♦ K J 9 5			
♣ 10 6			
WEST		EAST	
♠ K 9 6		♠ 8 7 4 3 2	
♥ 6 5		♥ 4	
♦ 8 6 2		♦ Q 10 4	
♣ K J 7 4 2		♣ 9 8 5 3	
SOUTH			
♠ A 5			
♥ K Q 10 9 8 3			
♦ A 7 3			
♣ A Q			

South dealer
North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
6 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's jump to 3 ♥ shows strong trump support of 4 or more cards, with 13 to 16 points in support of hearts. In this case North has 12 points in high cards and 1 point for the doubleton.

South has 19 points in high cards, 2 points for the doubletons, and 3 points for extra length in hearts. His full count is about 24 points, which means that the combined count is about 37 points. A grand slam is possible if North has the right cards.

South's bid of 4 NT asks North to show aces, and North shows one ace by the response of 5 ♦.

South next bids 5 NT to ask about kings, and North shows one king by the response of 6 ♦. South realizes that the opponents hold two kings. Since this makes a grand slam far too risky, South settles for a small slam in hearts.

The Play

Finesses are possible in every suit but trumps, but South can afford to lose only one trick. He must therefore choose a line of play that will exploit every possibility.

After drawing trumps, declarer begins with the spade finesse. If it wins, well and good; and if it loses, the suit will provide a discard.

The finesse loses, and declarer discards a diamond on the third spade. This allows him to test the diamonds by taking the top diamonds and ruffing a diamond. If the queen fails to drop, South can still try the club finesse.

This is better than discarding the queen of clubs on the third spade, for then the slam would depend on a diamond finesse. The actual line of play gives South several chances in diamonds (doubleton queen or 3-3 break) with the club finesse in reserve if the diamonds break badly.

DEAL No. 27

The Play

NORTH

♠ A J 8 5

♥ 8 4

♦ K 8 5

♣ K 6 5 2

WEST

♠ 4 2

♥ K Q J 9 5

♦ Q 6

♣ Q 10 8 4

EAST

♠ K 7 6 3

♥ 7 6 3 2

♦ 7 4 2

♣ J 9

SOUTH

♠ Q 10 9

♥ A 10

♦ A J 10 9 3

♣ A 7 3

South dealer

North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	1 ♥	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North shows his spade suit after West's overcall. South rebids a very descriptive 1 NT, North has enough to raise to two, and South, being only one point short of opening 1 NT originally, bids game. (Alternatively, South might have shown his spade support instead of bidding 3 NT, but North would realize that South had only three spades or else he would have supported at his first opportunity.)

The ace of hearts is driven out at once (a hold-up for one round would do no good), and South must try to win 9 tricks on the run.

One way is to guess which opponent has the queen of diamonds and get 5 diamond tricks by successful finesses. Then there will be a total of nine tricks with 5 diamonds, 1 heart, 1 spade and 2 clubs.

Another way is to finesse successfully for the king of spades. This will produce 4 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds, and 2 clubs.

The trouble is that an unsuccessful finesse will let the enemy in to run the hearts and defeat the contract. How can South tell which finesse is going to work?

South cannot tell, but he can do better by *combining both* suits than by relying on one suit alone. The best shot is to lead out both top diamonds in the hope of dropping the queen. If this fails, South can fall back on the spade finesse.

As it happens, the queen of diamonds drops, and South has his 9 tricks without a finesse.

DEAL No. 28

NORTH		EAST	
♠	6 5	♠	9 4 3
♥	7 6 4 3 2	♥	8 5
♦	K 6 3	♦	A 9 8 4 2
♣	A 3 2	♣	9 7 6
WEST		SOUTH	
♠	10 2	♠	A K Q J 8 7
♥	A Q 9	♥	K J 10
♦	Q J 10 5	♦	7
♣	Q 10 8 4	♣	K J 5

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
4 ♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

As we have seen (Deal 25), South could show a very strong hand by jumping to 3 ♠. This would show about 7 tricks and a very strong suit of 6 or more cards.

In this case, however, South has 6 spade tricks, at least 1 heart trick, and a probable trick in clubs—a total of about 8 tricks. South wants to be in game even if his partner would refuse a mere invitation. Hence he jumps all the way to game.

The difference between a rebid of 3 ♠ and 4 ♠ is not really a matter of points — after partner responds 1 NT, with a 7-trick hand you jump to three of your suit (invitational and non-forcing); with an 8-trick hand you go directly to game.

The Play

Declarer should not put up dummy's king of diamonds since West would not dream of leading away from the ace of diamonds against a suit contract. There is a remote chance that East has the singleton or doubleton ace of diamonds, and South should play for that rather than waste dummy's king. (Moreover, South doesn't want East on lead to play a heart through his K-J-10.)

After drawing trumps, South has to decide how to use dummy's only entry—the ace of clubs. A heart finesse is not likely to be useful; even if it works, South may still have to give up two heart tricks. A finesse of the club jack is a possibility.

First, however, South should tackle the hearts. If the suit breaks 3-2, South can give up two heart tricks and set up dummy's long suit. This will make it unnecessary for him to risk the club finesse.

In general, it pays to set up a long suit first and leave finesses for later. If the suits break favorably, you may not need the finesses; if the suits fail to break, you can then fall back on a finesse or two.

DEAL No. 29

NORTH	
♠	7 6 4 3
♥	K 6 5
♦	7 5
♣	K 8 6 5
WEST	EAST
♠	A K Q 10 5
♥	Q 8 7
♦	A 6
♣	7 4 3
SOUTH	
♠	8
♥	A J 9 4 3
♦	K Q J 10 2
♣	A Q

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

When North supports South's hearts, he feels that there should be enough tricks in the two hands (mostly in his) to make a game.

The Play

The main point of the play is that South must not risk the trump finesse. He can be sure of making the contract, as the deal sheet demonstrates, by taking the top trumps and then setting up the diamonds. All he needs is a 3-2 trump break.

If South tried the trump finesse and lost, back would come another spade to make South ruff again. He would then use up his last trump to draw the last trump held against him. West would get in with the ace of diamonds and could run the rest of the spades. South would be down two.

South could manage to go down only one by more careful play after losing a trump finesse, but this would not be a triumph.

The lesson to remember is that you cannot always afford a trump finesse when your trump length is being shortened. Take a top trump or two and go about your business in the side suits, allowing the opponent who has the queen of trumps to take it later on.

DEAL No. 30

		NORTH	
		♠	9 4 2
		♥	A Q 9 8 5 3
		♦	Q 7 4
		♣	A
WEST		EAST	
♠	Q 6 5	♠	7 3
♥	10 6 4	♥	K J 2
♦	K 8	♦	A 6 5 3
♣	Q J 10 9 3	♣	8 7 5 4
		SOUTH	
		♠	A K J 10 8
		♥	7
		♦	J 10 9 2
		♣	K 6 2

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's opening bid is minimum, so far as high cards are concerned, but a good 6-card major suit is not to be sniffed at.

South makes a quiet response of 1 ♠ at the first turn but must make a forcing jump to 3 ♠ at his second turn. South has the values of an opening bid, and should therefore force to game when his partner opens the bidding.

In terms of points, South has 12 points in high cards and knows that his partner has at least as many. The total should come to at least 24 points in high cards, plus whatever distributional points there may be lying around. This should be enough

for game in spades or, possibly, notrump.

As it happens, North has three spades and a side singleton, so can well afford to raise spades.

The Play

South can afford to lose one trump trick and two top diamonds. This is all he loses if he takes two rounds of trumps and ruffs a club before starting the diamonds.

If South takes one top trump, ruffs a low club in dummy, and then tries the spade finesse, he can (and will) go down. West wins with the queen of spades and switches to the king of diamonds. East takes the next diamond with the ace and leads a third diamond for West to ruff.

South must refuse the trump finesse because he can afford to lose to the queen of spades but not to both the queen of spades and a diamond ruff.

DEAL No. 31

		NORTH	
		♠ 8 6 3	
		♥ A K	
		♦ A Q 9 8 3	
		♣ J 10 6	
WEST		EAST	
♠ A 9 5		♠ K Q 10 7 2	
♥ Q 10 8 7 4		♥ J 6	
♦ 7 4 2		♦ K 5	
♣ K 4		♣ 8 7 3 2	
		SOUTH	
		♠ J 4	
		♥ 9 5 3 2	
		♦ J 10 6	
		♣ A Q 9 5	

North dealer
East-West vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Pass	1 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's response of 1 NT promises about 6 to 10 points in high cards. In this case South has 8 points.

Some experts would bid 1 ♥ on the South hand, on the theory that *any* 4-card suit is biddable in response to partner's opening bid. Other experts want a high eard or two at the head of a suit before they bid it.

North has no reason to disturb the contract of 1 NT. He has only 14 points in high cards and therefore knows that the partnership total is only 24 points at most. Since this is not enough for game, North should be satisfied with a part score.

The Play

Declarer is tempted to try a club or diamond finesse to go for all the tricks that are not nailed down. If both finesses should work, South would make 11 tricks!

It is only reasonable, however, to reflect that South may lose one or both finesses. Then the opponents may switch to spades. South can see that the opponents may well be able to take five spade tricks whenever they gain the lead. He can afford to give them only one other trick.

If South goes after the diamonds without bothering to finesse, he can take 4 diamonds, 2 hearts, and 1 club; and in the

meantime the opponents can presumably take only 1 diamond and about 5 spades. He therefore adopts this plan to make sure of his contract.

If South began by trying the club finesse, the defenders would take at least 5 spades and their 2 side kings, defeating the contract.

DEAL No. 32

NORTH			
♠	4 3		
♥	A J 9		
♦	K Q J 10 6		
♣	K J 3		
WEST		EAST	
♠	A K 9 8	♠	7 6 2
♥	8 7	♥	K 6 5 3 2
♦	7 3 2	♦	A 8 5
♣	8 7 6 2	♣	9 5
SOUTH			
♠	Q J 10 5		
♥	Q 10 4		
♦	9 4		
♣	A Q 10 4		

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South's first bid could have been made with a hand of anywhere from 6 to about 16 or so points. His second bid is a limit bid, defining his holding as being somewhere between 11 and 12 points. It is invitational and non-forcing, asking North to pass with a minimum opener and to bid game with extra values. Since

North holds close to a 1 NT opener, he has no qualms in bidding game.

The Play

South is tempted to take the heart finesse at Trick 1, but should look ahead to see what might happen.

East will win with the king of hearts (West's opening lead is an obvious top-of-nothing), and return a spade. South puts up the ten, and West wins with the king. West then returns the nine of spades to South's jack.

Declarer must next go after the diamonds, and East takes the ace. East leads another spade, and West is in position to take two more spade tricks. The defenders thus get 3 spades, 1 heart, and 1 diamond to defeat the contract.

Mind you, this is elegant defense, but all perfectly possible. South would risk it if he had to, but it would be foolish for him to take the risk if he can make sure of the contract in some other way.

As it happens, South can surely make the game if he wins the first trick with the ace of hearts and starts the diamonds at once. Come what may, he is sure of 4 diamonds, 1 heart, and 4 clubs.

Grimaud

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